

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD
MINUTES

Date: December 21, 2021
Time: 10:00am
Place: Via Zoom Meeting
Egremont

Present in-person were Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie. For part of the meeting Georgette Kinney was present in-person.

Others participating via zoom: Richard Stanley, Sue Funk, Bob & Linda Warner, Poly Lanoue, Ray Palmucci, Eileen Vining, Ellen Maggio, Mary C, Abigail Rogers-McKee, Bruce Kaufenbaum, Russ Peacock, Susan Warshaw, Amy Edelman, Dave Seligman, Peg McDonough, Chuck Ogden, Sharon Waskow, Juliette Haas, Judie Grossman, Mary McGurn, Will Brinker, Darya Geeter, Marj Wexler, Liz Jaffe, Marilyn Rector, Somer Serpe, Janet Lessem, Bob Putz, Betty F, Anna Makki, Rolfe Tessem, Ethan Bryan, Lizzie Olesker, Kevin Zurrin, Robi, Julie, Ethan Bunyon, Barbara Kalish, Wendy Albano, Jim Reynolds, 347-979-4395.

It was announced that the meeting is video and audio recorded.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the December 7, 2021 meeting were accepted with minor edits.

SCHEDULED ISSUES:

The tentatively scheduled Tax Classification Hearing was postponed to a date unknown. Many taxpayers were present to discuss the valuation disclosure notice announcing substantial increases in home values that went out at the end of the prior week. Taxpayers were quite angry that notice gave only a few days notice to protest the increased value. The Selectboard declared that statutorily it was the elected Board of Assessors who sent the notice and the Selectboard had no control over the process. Taxpayers were told to contact the Board of Assessors office as stated in the notice.

TOWN OFFICIALS:

Chuck Ogden, Chairman of the Board of Health, asked that the topic of Egremont joining the Southern Berkshire Public Health Alliance be placed on a future agenda. This will require a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Selectboard.

NEW BUSINESS:

Juliette Haas gave the Board the offices to be elected at the May Annual Election and noted that in the past years officials have run unopposed which shows a hesitancy to run for office. Elected officials are required to reside and vote in Egremont. She reminded the Board of the three questions that will also be on the ballot: appointing the Town Clerk and Tree Warden and changing the Moderators term of office. She expressed her support for the appointment of the Town Clerk for various reasons including the fact that the Town Clerk would then be an employee of the town and would not need to be a town resident. She suggested that some outreach be done in support of the questions.

The Board reviewed the 2016 Use of Legal Counsel policy, which currently allows all town departments to choose a representative to contact counsel for advice after discussion of the issue at a public meeting and to copy the Selectboard on the request. Chairman McGurn proposed an amendment

requiring requests for legal advice to go the Selectboard first, but that delays what may be a time sensitive need for a response. It was agreed that a paper trail is important. Chairman McGurn will propose some edits at the next board meeting.

The Board agreed to send a reminder to all town departments about the requirements for meeting minutes and reminder that they should be written in a professional manner.

The Board voted unanimously to declare the summer seasonal population at 5000 for purposes of establishing the number of liquor licenses the Town can issue.

The Board accepted, with thanks for the many things she has done, the resignation of Peggy Muskrat from the Cultural Council.

The Board voted unanimously, with the recommendation of Architect and Project Manager Lyn Smith, to award the Library Stabilization and ADA construction project to LaRoche Construction Company out of South Hadley Mass as the low bidder at \$276,800, and to include the alternate bid for new carpet . Five bids were received ranging in price from \$273,000 to \$435,845.

OLD BUSINESS:

Georgette Kinney reported that the Council on Aging has formed a subcommittee to look at the criteria for Egremont's prominent citizens contribution to the community whose passing required public recognition. The Council is also considering the best places for the vest distribution boxes.

A fundraiser was set up on Facebook to get donations to pay for waste removal at the French Park Dog Park and successfully raised enough funds to pay for waste removal for the balance of this fiscal year. It was interesting to note that the majority of the donations came from residents of town's other than Egremont. The Board debated the best way to deal with ongoing issues at the dog park. The Board voted unanimously to close the dog park to Egremont residents only for a 30 day trial period. Vice-Chairman Vermeulen will try to gather a group of users to oversee the dog park moving forward. Further discussion may take place at the next meeting.

GRANTS:

An implementation grant is being looked at to follow the Forest Management Plan at French Park.

The Community Health Initiative grant in the amount of \$10,000 was awarded to the Town to study accessible access to Prospect Lake. The time frame for expending the grant is January, 2022 to June 2022. A Committee is recommended. Peg McDonough has spoken with the Department of Conservation & Recreation about the state access site and she will continue to investigate.

Interviews for a consultant to do both the Open Space & Recreation Plan update and the Master Plan update are wrapping up. A recommendation should be made to the Board sometime in mid-January.

The Water Department is seeking up to \$35,000 in American Rescue Program Act (ARPA) funds to contract with Tighe & Bond for a capital improvement plan to include an inspection of the Karner Brooke Dam, but not to include a Hydraulic Model Development. The Board voted unanimously to approve.

ARPA funds can be used to conduct a study of the Fire Department's draft hydrants. Tighe & Bond will be approached to see if they are interested in giving a quote.

COVID-19:

No changes to report at this time.

FOLLOW UPS/UPDATES:

The Board agreed to a tax bill stuffer announcement of the Fiber Connects low income subsidy vs the actual application as Fiber Connect may be updating the form.

At 11:42 am the Board voted unanimously to go into executive session for collective bargaining strategy as allowed by MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21, Paragraph 2. The Board will not return to open session.

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.22/dec21

The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.